

Undoubtedly, Jerstad thinks a lot about what death will be like. But he doesn't fear it.

"One of the things that fires me up," he said, and his voice breaks as his eyes fill with tears, "is knowing I'll get the chance to meet my dad again. He died a couple of years ago. I loved him dearly."

What a glorious reunion, the son said. Yet until then, this husband and father intends to revel in the support of his family, his friends and his faith—for as long as he has.

"I have to say, I wonder if I have been given a gift," Jerstad said, marveling at his own outlook. "I mean, I'm surely not in denial. If anyone has accepted the reality of their death much sooner than normal, it is I."

GIFT OF FAITH

How can that be? How can anyone face death with no resentment, anger or bitterness?

In a phrase, he said with a smile, it is a gift.

"The gift of faith," Mark Jerstad said. "Maybe I'm not angry because I'm so hopeful for the life beyond this life."

"I'll be honest; I know my life is in the hands of the Lord. I can't fantasize anything better than that."

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ASHCROFT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The hour of 12 o'clock having arrived, morning business is closed.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of Senate Joint Resolution 1, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 1) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to require a balanced budget.

The Senate resumed consideration of the joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. I thank the Chair.

We are returning to the balanced budget constitutional amendment debate. This is a singularly important debate in our Nation's history. And while I am talking, I am going to constantly refer to just 28 of the unbalanced budgets since 1969—28 of them. We had to find a table strong enough to hold them, and we could not put them on top of each other. As you can see, they are almost as high as I am, stacked in twos and threes. If we put them on top of each other, they would reach almost

to the ceiling. These are our unbalanced budgets over the last 28 years, every last one. And yet every time we get into this debate, our friends on the other side of this issue come in and say, "Oh, let's just have the will to do this. We can do it if we want to, if we just have the will." And we heard the President the other evening talking about all you have to do is pass it and I will sign it.

Give me a break. That is what was said in every one of these instances. And a number of them were listed as balanced budgets during this time. It turned out to be horrendous budgetary deficits rather than balanced budgets. You can just look at this stack—and this is just 28 years. This does not count the other unbalanced budgets for most of the last 60 years. This is just 28 years, these stacks right here.

A lot of good intentions, a lot of people working hard to try to do what is right but never accomplishing it because they did not have the fiscal discipline necessary to get it accomplished. You cannot look at this and listen to these arguments of "Why don't we just do what we should do."

After 28 years—and we are just using the last 28 years like I am saying—after 28 years we have to wake up and say we do need a fiscal mechanism to help Congress to do its job because it has not done its job in the last 37 years and most of the last 60 years.

If we put them all up here, we would not have room. Frankly, we are worried with this stack that we might be violating OSHA rules. If these happen to fall over, somebody's leg could get broken.

We are returning to this debate, and it is an important debate. It is about whether we have reached the turning point in our Nation's history in our fiscal affairs which will change the way we have been doing business. We are hoping that if we pass this amendment, we will profoundly effect a legacy we leave to all future Americans.

We have, as I have said, had piled on this table the failed budgetary history of the last 28 years. These are the unbroken string of unbalanced budgets that we have had since 1969.

As Senator ABRAHAM observed last night, this is about as close to balancing the budget as we have come, balancing these budget documents on this table so they will not fall over. That is about as close as we get to balancing budgets. We are not sure we have it balanced well even that way, so you can imagine how difficult it must be to try to balance them the real way.

We received today yet another budget submission. In this one, President Clinton has promised to point us to balancing our budget by the year 2002. In the coming days and weeks, the Congress will be reviewing this budget submission to determine whether it will be just another failed attempt that we toss on top of this huge pile. Of course, since this budget for fiscal year 1998 will not itself balance, it can be placed

on this stack of unbalanced budgets. But we have yet to see if Congress will be able to work with this budget submission to get us on the path to balance by 2002.

We should all understand that the backdrop to all this is that the Congressional Budget Office has recently painted a less rosy picture of the deficit in the next few years under current policies. Let me just take this chart.

As this chart shows, CBO predicts that the deficit will begin to rise this year and continue rising throughout the foreseeable future. The CBO predicts that the deficit will rise to \$124 billion in fiscal year 1997 and continue to rise to \$188 billion by fiscal year 2002, the year we hope we will have balanced the budget. The deficits just keep rising until 2007, as you can see. Our annual deficit is projected to be, at that time, \$278 billion a year.

Added up, these deficits will add a total of more than 2 trillion additional dollars to the debt from now until the year 2007. That is if we do what the President is going to offer today.

The point is that we cannot yet congratulate ourselves for a job well done. There is work ahead for all of us to do, and there is no assurance of success. Based on the sad history illustrated by these 28 years of budgetary submissions, success has to be considered, by any reasonable person, to be in serious doubt. That is why we need a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. It has been called an insurance policy that we will get the budget actually balanced in the year 2002 and, more important, that we keep it balanced afterward, instead of doing what it appears will be done up through the year 2007, a continual rising deficit each year, well over hundreds of billions of dollars.

I think the combination of these illustrations of the past and the projections for the future based on our current policy suggest that the past is prologue and should show us that we need a balanced budget amendment.

We have been through debates on this measure before. I would like to outline briefly for those watching these debates what they are likely to hear from the opponents of this amendment based on past debates and the positions outlined to this point in this debate.

First, let me point out this is not a partisan disagreement or debate, and it should not be. That is only fitting and proper for a constitutional debate. You have to have people on both sides supporting a constitutional amendment or there is no way it even has a chance of passing. This is a bipartisan amendment.

Some opponents of a balanced budget amendment will attempt to paint this debate as a battle of parties, of a choice between a Republican amendment or a Democrat amendment or Democrat opposition to the amendment. While I hasten to point out that all 55 Republican Senators, every one of us, are supportive of this balanced